

**Steve Bellone**

SUFFOLK COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Sarah Lansdale
CommissionerDepartment of Economic Development and Planning
Division of Planning and Environment**STAFF REPORT****SECTIONS A14-14 THRU A14-24 OF THE SUFFOLK COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE CODE**

Applicant: Town of Southampton Housing Plan
Municipality: Town of Southampton

Received: 07/07/2022
File Number: SH-22-01
T.P.I.N.: N/A
Jurisdiction: Draft Housing Plan

PROPOSAL DETAILS**OVERVIEW**

The Southampton Town Board has referred, on its own motion, to the Suffolk County Planning Commission the "The Draft Housing Plan, Town of Southampton New York - May 2022" (see link below)

(<https://www.southamptontownny.gov/DocumentCenter/View/26063/Southampton-Housing-Plan---CPF-Referendum>).

Referral materials to the Suffolk County Planning Commission by the Southampton Town Board indicates that the "Housing Plan addresses critical questions on the Towns housing issues to guide future projects." The "Housing Plan, Town of Southampton, New York" was prepared by the Town of Southampton Housing and Community Services and is intended to be adopted by the Town Board as an updated element of the Town of Southampton Comprehensive Plan.

The Draft Housing Plan, Town of Southampton, New York – May 2022 was prepared by a process of "reviewing relevant policy and planning documents, researched census data and other publicly available datasets and engaged directly with the public through a series of virtual public forums and online surveys of residents." The Housing Plan addresses key demographic trends in Southampton; characteristics of Southampton's housing supply; housing challenges; neighborhood aspirations and provides steps to put in place to realize the cumulative vision of the Town.

The findings of the Draft Housing Plan, Town of Southampton, New York, were synthesized and presented as a new housing vision for the Town including a discussion about a proposed Community Housing Fund to be established by a 0.5% supplemental real estate transfer tax.

Chapter 5, *Housing Vision and Goals*, of the Southampton Housing Plan referred to the Suffolk County Planning Commission by the Southampton Town Board, states that "In anticipation of transformative demographic shifts, the Town of Southampton will embrace the goals of affordability, sustainability, inclusiveness, equity and fair housing.

The Town will deploy its resources to promote the development of diverse housing typologies, including entry-level units, small apartments and condominiums, rentals, employer-based housing, and multifamily configurations. Without jeopardizing community character, the Town will encourage walkable mixed use development in the vicinity of transit hubs.”

It is noted in the Plan that the report was “written during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. The impact that the pandemic will have on suburban housing markets like Southampton is not yet known, but it is anticipated that housing demand will grow, at least in the short term, as some residents of larger cities seek rural and suburban housing alternatives.”

STAFF ANALYSIS

SUFFOLK COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION GUIDELINE CONSIDERATIONS: The Suffolk County Planning Commission has identified six general Critical County Wide Priorities that include:

1. Environmental Protection
2. Energy efficiency
3. Economic Development, Equity and Sustainability
4. Housing Diversity
5. Transportation
6. Public Safety

The policies are reflected in the Suffolk County Planning Commission Guidebook (unanimously adopted July 11, 2012). Below are items for consideration regarding the above policies:

The Draft Housing Plan – Town of Southampton (May 2022) referred to the Suffolk County Planning Commission from the Southampton Town Board does not address environmental protection in terms of broad sustainability. Environmental protection is only referred to as a “constraint” (Section 3 Subsection 3.3, Page 25). These constraints cite protected lands such as the Pine Barrens and established parks. The plan does not mention renewable resources, climate change, or protection of natural resources. The furthest extent mentioned is the enforcement and compliance with the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA). While the Housing document does not focus on design. The Housing Plan should make mention of the use of natural vegetation and green methodologies for the treatment of storm water runoff. Moreover, the use of Parking stall demand reduction techniques can increase density on site while reducing overall parking surface area and may also increase green space on site. The Housing Plan should make mention of the Suffolk County Planning Commission guidelines on Managing Stormwater – Natural vegetation and Green methodologies and the Commission's Parking Stall Demand Reduction study and Model Code.

Neither the term “energy” nor equivalent terminology is identified in the housing plan. The closest mentioning is regarding utilities, where Southampton provides utility allowances for affordable housing units. Another reference to utilities refers to ensuring planned development zones are well-connected to sufficient and quality utilities such as potable water and municipal sewer (and including access to heating, indoor plumbing, air conditioning, electricity, etc.). The Town should consider the Suffolk County Planning Commission Guidebook Section 4.3 regarding Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency and incorporate, where practical guiding principles therein that promote the installation of renewable energy systems that take advantage of our local solar, wind and geothermal resources.

The plan places a heavy emphasis on economic stability and growth that is “sustainable” and that housing is a crucial component to the Town’s economy. In terms of equity and sustainability, It also mentions the critical importance of increasing the affordable housing supply, which the lack of has contributed to a difficulty in retention of a workforce and longevity of the town economy.

The ambitions to increase economic development also include accommodating middle-income families. As mentioned twice verbatim in the Executive Summary (Page 4) and Section 5 Subsection 5.1 (Page 37), Southampton embraces “affordability, sustainability, inclusiveness, equity, and fair housing”.

Considering housing diversity, this plan addresses the Town of Southampton’s lack of affordable housing and aims to increase its current 1.2% (520 total) of housing units being considered “affordable”(Page 11, Section 2 Subsection 2.5). The Town also strives to enforce a development quota of 10% of new dwelling units to be affordable workforce housing on site, as per the Long Island Workforce Housing Program (Page 23). In conjunction with its ambitions, maintain the “Look and Feel” of the Town’s highly regarded aesthetic and character.

The town takes note of its increasing racially diverse population, where ~11% of the population is non-white. It also acknowledges particular racially diverse hamlets such as Northampton and Flanders. It is noted that a parts of the Town of Southampton are designated by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS DEC) as a Potential Environmental Justice Area (PEJA). The Southampton Housing Plan should address procedures to accommodate the goal of Environmental Justice on those neighborhoods in the Town identified by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. The Town of Southampton should be advised that all matters referred to the Suffolk County Planning Commission pursuant to New York State General Municipal Law, Sections 239 l – n and the Suffolk County Administrative Code Sections A14-14 – 25 that are situated within or adjacent to a Potential Environmental Justice Area shall be considered by the Suffolk County Planning Commission to be Regionally Significant pursuant to Section 1.3 of the Suffolk County Planning Commission Guidebook.

The Draft Housing Plan, Town of Southampton New York – May 2022 investigates a hamlet by hamlet assessment of workforce housing opportunities. The Housing Plan should investigate standards and guidelines to accommodate the intent and recommendations of Environmental and Social Justice initiatives when considering the locations for affordable and rental housing projects and seek “Opportunity Areas” for the above mentioned housing projects (see Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice 2020 Suffolk County Department of Economic Development and Planning).

The Draft Housing Plan, Town of Southampton New York (May 2022) highlights housing goals to address its internal housing challenges such as alleviating housing costs (Page 37), providing housing for “all” (Page 40), promoting creating infill (Page 40), targeted planning around transit hubs (Page 41), and providing housing stock with more affordable options (Page 41).

The plan highlights prime locations in terms of Transit-Oriented Development, specifically by LIRR stations throughout the Montauk Branch. The town also aims to invest in bike infrastructure and encourage alternative transportation choices in mixed-use, walkable environments. The plan in general notes the importance of public transportation and acknowledges its car-dependent suburban/rural environment.

The term “Public Safety” is only mentioned regarding the Public Safety Administrator, which refers to provisions and safety precautions of manufactured home communities reviewed by the Administrator and Town Board. Safety is addressed in terms of aquifer protection, exclusively, citing the Aquifer Protection Overlay District as per Chapter 330 of the town code.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Approval of the Draft Housing Plan - Town of Southampton New York, May, 2022 with the following Comments:

Comments:

1. The Draft Housing Plan – Town of Southampton New York (May 2022) should contain a passage that commits the Town to include, as a set aside from constructed Workforce/affordable housing units, a certain percentage, that are accessible and inclusive for individuals with developmental disabilities.
2. The Town should consider the Suffolk County Planning Commission Guidebook Section 4.3 regarding Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency and incorporate, where practical guiding principles therein that promote the installation of renewable energy systems that take advantage of our local solar, wind and geothermal resources.
3. It is noted that a part of Town of Southampton is designated by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS DEC) as a Potential Environmental Justice Area (PEJA). The Housing Plan- Town of Southampton should address procedures to accommodate the goal of Environmental Justice on those neighborhoods in the Town identified by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.
4. The Town of Southampton should be advised that all matters referred to the Suffolk County Planning Commission pursuant to New York State General Municipal Law, Sections 239 l – n and the Suffolk County Administrative Code Sections A14-14 – 25 that are situated within or adjacent to a Potential Environmental Justice Area shall be considered by the Suffolk County Planning Commission to be Regionally Significant pursuant to Section 1.3 of the Suffolk County Planning Commission Guidebook.
5. The Draft Housing Plan, Town of Southampton New York – May 2022 should investigate standards and guidelines to accommodate the intent and recommendations of Environmental and Social Justice initiatives when considering the locations for affordable and rental housing projects and seek “Opportunity Areas” for the above mentioned housing projects (see Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice 2020 Suffolk County Department of Economic Development and Planning).
6. The Town should review the Suffolk County Planning Commission Guidelines on Public Safety and incorporate into the Town of Southampton Housing Plan practical elements therein.
7. The Housing Plan should make mention of the Suffolk County Planning Commission guidelines on Managing Stormwater – Natural vegetation and Green methodologies and the Commissions Parking Stall Demand Reduction study and Model Code. The Draft Housing Plan – Town of Southampton (May 2022) referred to the Suffolk County Planning Commission from the Southampton Town Board does not address environmental protection in terms of broad sustainability. Environmental protection is only referred to as a “constraint” (Section 3 Subsection 3.3, Page 25). These constraints cite protected lands such as the Pine Barrens and established parks. The plan does not mention renewable resources, climate change, or protection of natural resources.

The furthest extent mentioned is the enforcement and compliance with the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA). While the Housing document does not focus on design. The Housing Plan should make mention of the use of natural vegetation and green methodologies for the treatment of storm water runoff. Moreover, the use of Parking stall demand reduction techniques can increase density on site while reducing overall parking surface area and may also increase on site green space.